

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Orcon Corporation

#### Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex)

#### Orcon Employs Lean Techniques To Improve Efficiency

##### Client Profile:

Orcon Corporation was founded in 1962 and produces quality lightweight, non-woven, reinforced materials for the aerospace industry. The company name is derived from the types of products Orcon produces: oriented continuous strands. In 1970, the company added a Carpet Seaming Tape Division to serve both the residential and commercial carpet industries. That year, Orcon developed its first hot melt carpet seaming tape. Now known as Orcon's Floor Covering Installation Systems Division (FCISD), this unit produces high-quality flooring installation tools in addition to seaming tapes used by carpet installers to close and secure seams during carpet installation. The company is located in Union City, California and employs less than 500 people.

##### Situation:

Orcon already knew the benefits of lean manufacturing, and had begun a lean implementation by value stream mapping another product line. Because the previous implementation was yielding excellent results, the company wanted to continue lean training in the FCISD division. The FCISD area consists of multiple knitting machines that feed into long glue applicators and spoolers. The entire area employs a traditional batch and queue scheduling system. Inventory levels had been increasing over the last several years and floor space was slowly being consumed by work-in-process. Orcon asked the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to lead its next lean project.

##### Solution:

Manex created a cross-functional team of Orcon employees and the participants, led by Manex, created a value stream map of the FCISD line. During this process, the team identified many areas for improvement. With additional training in 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain), the team reorganized the FCISD line to improve efficiencies and eliminate waste. By the end of the week, the team had also implemented a pull kanban inventory system.

##### Results:

Reduced lead time in the FCISD area by 72 percent.  
Reduced floor space required for production by 245 feet.  
Reduced product travel distance by 60 percent.

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Reduced work-in-process inventory by 66 percent.

**Testimonial:**

"The Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex) provided Orcon with the knowledge and tools to achieve these successes. We couldn't have done it without Manex."

Bobbie Goodwin, Vice President of Operations